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ABSTRACT

This final report describes the activities and outcomes of the Ohio Higher Education Partnership Project (OHEPP), a federally funded project designed to develop a model for promoting greater levels of participation within institutions of higher education by parents of children with disabilities. OHEPP has the following three objectives: (1) to develop and support parent-faculty "teams" throughout the state; (2) to provide financial support for parent involvement; and (3) to develop a strategic plan for ongoing financial support for parent participation in higher education in Ohio. OHEPP developed an instructional model that included the following components: (a) developing parent skills and understanding of higher education; (b) promoting access to and financial support of parents; and (c) increasing faculty receptiveness to parent-participation. The project resulted in an increase in the number of parents involved in higher education and an increase in the number and types of courses in which parents were involved. In addition, the role of parents on instructional teams in higher education expanded. Finally, students demonstrated a change in the way they viewed the role of parents of children with disabilities in higher education. The training activities included workshops and retreats. The parent activities were consistent with recommended practices for personnel preparation as instructors, mentors and supervisors. In summary, the project trained many parents in many roles on parent-faculty teams, and it helped meet the need to train practitioners in the principles of family-centered care for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families. Includes references, a short videotape, and two powerpoint presentations. (Author/SG)

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Ohio Higher Education Partnership Project Final Report

Ohio Higher Education Partnership Project
Report Period: September 1997 through August 2001
Grant #H029K70125

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Ohio Higher Education Partnership Project:
Building Parent-Faculty Teams Across Ohio

BACKGROUND AND HISTORY

Since the implementation of the Infant and Toddler Program (Part C) of the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) the need to train practitioners in the principles of family-centered care for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families has been well documented (Roberts, Rule & Innocenti, 1998; Whitehead, 1998). Institutions of higher education have attempted to include families of children with disabilities in early intervention training (Capone & DiVenere, 1996). A growing body of research has demonstrated the important role of family involvement in preservice personnel preparation (Whitehead, Jensien & Ulanske, 1998; Whitehead & Sontage, 1993: Winton & DiVenere, 1995). McBride, Sharp, Harris and Whitehead (1995) identified three powerful outcomes that parent participation in personnel preparation can facilitate: 1) the modeling of family-provider collaboration, 2) the promotion of an affective understanding of family-centered practices, and 3) the infusion of a family-centered perspective throughout the course or curriculum. Clearly, including family members of children with disabilities on instructional teams in institutions of higher education can enrich the educational experience of students and help to promote family-centered early intervention practitioners.

Despite a survey by Campbell (1994) indicating increasing parent involvement in personnel preparation, to date parents have played a very limited role in preparing students within institutions of higher education. Given that parents of children with disabilities potentially have such a powerful role to play, why is parent involvement in higher education still so rare? Such factors as time, lack of financial support for families, and difficulty finding parents who are willing and interested may prevent faculty from making use of parents on more than a sporadic basis; institutions of higher education are often challenged by the flexibility and financial supports needed to involve parents in instructional roles (Whitehead & Sontag, 1993). Parents themselves have identified similar barriers: 1) a model that adequately prepares parents to serve in instructional roles; 2) ongoing supports (mentoring and financial reimbursement) to parents who serve in those roles; and 3) adequate preparation of faculty so that they respect and utilize parents in effective ways (Capone, 1995). When faculty and families work together, it is crucial that both parties have a mutual understanding of expectations, levels of involvement, and how the relationship is to be defined (McBride et al., 1995). What could happen, then, if these barriers were addressed?

PROJECT OVERVIEW

Ohio Higher Education Partnership Project

In 1997, the Family Child Learning Center (affiliated with the Children's Hospital Medical Center of Akron and Kent State University) received funding from the U.S. Department of Education, Office of Special Education Programs, to develop a model for promoting greater levels of participation within institutions of higher education by parents of children with disabilities. At that time, some attempts were being made to involve parents of children with disabilities in higher education in Ohio. As part of our

needs assessment, we conducted a statewide survey of faculty from special education, early childhood, school psychology, and other related disciplines. Responses from 31 faculty representing 10 disciplines indicated that parents were involved in 57 percent of the courses being taught at that time. Of the 31 respondents, 11 (35%) reported that they had never involved parents. The typical role of parent involvement was that of "telling their story," usually via a panel presentation. Fewer than 10 percent of the faculty respondents involved a parent more than once during a course. The respondents perceived the following as the greatest barriers to parent involvement: no means for reimbursement, logistical factors such as parking and childcare, and a limited number of topics where parent participation would be relevant.

Consequently, based on the literature and our own survey data, we viewed parent participation in higher education as a multi-faceted phenomenon that included the following components: a) developing parent skills and understanding of higher education; b) promoting access to and financial support of parents; and c) increasing faculty receptiveness to parent participation. By proposing a model of parent-faculty partnerships, we anticipated the following impacts: 1) an increased number of parents involved in higher education; 2) an increase in the number and types of courses in which parents are involved; 3) an expansion in the types of roles played by parents; 4) a change in how faculty view the value of parents; and, above all, 5) changes in how students view the value and role of parents of children with disabilities.

OHEPP Philosophy

The Ohio Higher Education Partnership Project was built upon the principles of parent-professional partnerships and participant-centered instruction. OHEPP has fostered parent-professional partnerships through the employment of parents as staff and consultants, parent-professional training teams, and the inclusion of parents and professionals in all project activities. OHEPP has developed training curricula, educational materials and activities designed to form and support parent-faculty instructional teams in higher education. The training material was presented in a variety of formats including workshops and retreats. The information presented was customized according to individual needs, yet always offered opportunities for participants to exercise control and guidance over their own learning.

Training Activities:

A Tool Box for Parents and Faculty

OHEPP staff have developed a training curriculum and additional support materials designed to build parent-faculty instructional teams (partnerships) in institutions of higher education. The curriculum was presented in workshop format, *A Tool Box for Parents and Faculty*. The workshop objectives included describing options for increasing parent involvement in higher education, promoting access to family involvement, and increasing faculty receptiveness to parent participation. Throughout the workshop parent-faculty teams were provided with opportunities to enhance their knowledge and skills in relation to specific objectives such as: 1) why parents should be involved in higher education; 2) how parents are currently involved, and 3) defining the possibilities for family involvement in higher education. The curriculum was presented in a workshop that

addressed the knowledge and skills needed by both parents and faculty in order to work collaboratively in preservice and inservice personnel preparation. The *Tool Box* workshops were presented annually (N=3). Over the three years OHEPP staff used preliminary data to modify the curriculum presented at *Tool Box* workshops. That is, both context and content were examined and modified to ensure that the training sessions were responsive to the needs of both parents and faculty. For example, the curriculum in the initial *Tool Box* workshop was presented in four three-hour sessions and the final *Tool Box* workshop was presented in one six-hour session. The activities that remained constant throughout the *Tool Box* workshops were those learning opportunities that responded to the actual challenges reported by participants implementing the training-teams. The activities that proved most useful afforded participants an opportunity to explore: role clarification, communication and misconceptions.

Annual Retreat

The OHEPP staff developed and implemented a series of annual retreats (n=2), *OHEPP Class Reunions*. The retreats were designed to provide ongoing technical assistance to project participants. The first objective was, to provide participants with an opportunity to reflect upon the accomplishments of their team and design a *Blueprint* for continuing the partnership. The second objective was to provide a forum for determining areas of concern and designing ongoing technical assistance and support opportunities to address the evolving issues associated with maintaining parent-faculty partnerships. For example at the first retreat participants expressed a desire to enhance communication between each other. Subsequently two activities were initiated: 1) the establishment of an electronic listserve and 2) the publication of a directory listing project participants. A third objective was to keep participants informed of the progress of the project. In this regard, participants received written reports highlighting the characteristics of participants, a description of the various ways parents had been included in the teams, and an assessment of the impact on students.

In addition to the annual retreats, OHEPP staff conducted two Spring Retreats for parents. The Spring Retreats grew from a request from parents. The primary objective was to provide additional opportunities for parents to learn new techniques for communicating their ideas to professionals and students. A central feature of these retreats was the resource exchange. In addition to providing tips for enhancing presentations and group facilitation skills, OHEPP staff and project participants demonstrated and exchanged lesson plans.

Outreach Activities

OHEPP staff conducted a variety of outreach activities designed to recruit and retain project participants. Initial efforts included an emphasis upon building strong relationships with university administrators. Activities specifically designed to enlist administrative support included creating public awareness materials that highlighted project objectives and outcomes such as: 1) developing and disseminating a brochure, *Ohio Higher Education Partnership Project: Building parent-faculty teams across Ohio*; 2) developing and disseminating a video tape, *Ohio Higher Education Partnership*

Project, which included testimonials from parents, faculty members and students; and 3) sending letters of recognition to the deans of participating faculty members.

Outreach activities were also aimed at recruiting and supporting parent-faculty teams. Activities undertaken to specifically support parent-faculty teams focused on providing opportunities to enhance communication and increase access to parents. Two such activities were the parent-faculty directory and an electronic listserve. In addition to including basic directory information the *OHEPP Parent-Faculty Directory* included brief biographical information on area of interest and subject area for parents and faculty respectively. The directory was updated on an ongoing basis and distributed to project participants annually. The listserve was established and monitored by OHEPP staff, and open only to project participants. The listserve was used as a bulletin board, to disseminate information regarding project activities, and as a means of communication among project participants. It proved to be an especially useful tool in exchanging basic logistical information that parents found helpful when preparing for a presentation, such as tips to locating a parking spot and how to navigate a particular university. In sum, both the directory and listserve enhanced opportunities for communication among participants and between OHEPP staff and project participants.

Dissemination Activities

OHEPP staff had the opportunity to disseminate project findings to interested colleagues at three national/international professional conferences. In 2000 OHEPP staff were invited to present at the 16th Annual Division of Early Childhood International Early childhood Conference on Children with Special Needs. The conference sessions, *A Real-Eye-Opener: Looking at Parent-Faculty Partnerships Through Students' Eyes*, presented preliminary data gathered from student reflections upon parent-faculty instructional teams in institutions of higher education. OHEPP staff received a second opportunity to participate in the annual DEC conference in 2001 at the Early Childhood In The New Millennium Conference: Recommended Practices for the Future. During this session, *Parent-Faculty Partnerships: Where Are We Going?* OHEPP staff presented project findings in relation to supporting the changing role of parents in higher education. That is, an examination of the criteria associated with developing and maintaining parent-faculty instructional teams. A final opportunity to present research findings included an invitation to hold a conference session at the 26th International Conference on Improving Learning and Teaching at the University, held in Johannesburg, South Africa, in July 2001. This conference session, *A Real-Eye-Opener: Can Parent-Faculty Partnerships Enhance Learning and Teaching in the Higher Education Classroom,* focused on reducing barriers to parent-faculty teams and the potential for enhanced learning experiences for students.

PROJECT FINDINGS

Parent-Faculty Teams: Profiles

A total of 73 participants took part in the *Tool Box* workshops. Of those participants attending the training sessions, 36 (49%) were parents. The remaining 37 participants (51%) were college/university faculty members.

Parents. Over the three-year period a total of 36 parents participated in the *Tool Box* training session. All but three (92%) of the parents went on to participate on parent-faculty teams. The parents represented 12 Ohio counties and were interested in a wide variety of topics: autism, cerebral palsy, early intervention services, family-centered services, financial resources, home-school and community relations, IEP/IFSP process, laws, Federal regulations & State policies, parent-professional collaboration, social support, therapeutic interventions and transition services.

Faculty. Over the three-year period a total of 37 faulty members participated in the *Tool Box* training session. All but nine (75%) of the trained faculty members subsequently participated in parent-faculty partnerships that included involving parents in instructional teams in higher education. A total of twelve Northeast Ohio universities and colleges were represented: Ashland University, Cleveland State University, Case Western Reserve, Cuyahoga Community College, Kent State University, Lakeland Community College, Malone College, North Central State College, Northeastern Ohio College of Medicine, Notre Dame College of Ohio, the University of Akron, and Youngstown University. The faculty represented 12 disciplines: audiology, counseling, early childhood education, education (K-12), nursing, nutrition, occupational therapy, pediatrics, rehabilitation, school psychology, speech-language pathology and special education.

Parent-Faculty Teams: *Blueprints*

Parent-faculty teams were asked to participate in the *Tool Box* training. To develop and implement a *Blueprint*: their plan for parent involvement in the upcoming academic year. To maintain open and frequent lines of communication with OHEPP staff and especially to communicate needs for additional supports or resources needed to make their plan successful. Teams were asked to assist in supporting parents by following the established procedures for parent reimbursement. Finally parent-faculty teams were asked to participate in evaluating the project and to attend a follow-up meeting within twelve months.

Barriers to Getting Started

Three main barriers to getting partnerships started include: 1) part-time faculty status, 2) course scheduling, and 3) parents waiting to be invited. A significant number (n=9/24%) of faculty members who participated in the initial *Tool Box* workshop were part-time faculty members who did not receive teaching appointments in the academic year. In subsequent *Tool Box* training sessions, efforts were made to limit selection to faculty with current teaching appointments. An additional reason for more parents being ready to get started than faculty was the tendency among universities to offer courses on a staggered schedule. Therefore more parents (86%) than faculty members (64%) were ready to begin the partnership immediately after the *Tool Box* workshop. As part of the ongoing technical assistance, OHEPP staff identified parents who had not had an opportunity to participate with their faculty partner and efforts were made to provide additional opportunities for their involvement, such as linking interested parents with faculty members holding current teaching assignments. In addition, some faculty members attended a *Tool Box* workshop in the first round but had not involved parents after the end

of the academic year. In the second round of *Tool Box* workshops, efforts were made to ensure that all participating faculty members had a current teaching assignment. As shown in Figure 1, over the course of training rounds the number of parents waiting to get started in their partnerships decreased and the number of faculty members getting started in their partnership increased. It would appear that ongoing technical support and the resultant modifications to the *Tool Box* workshops helped to close the initial gap between parents waiting to get started and faculty ready to start. In sum, after the second training round almost equal numbers of parents (97%) and faculty members (94%) were ready to start their partnership.

Supporting the Partnership

Near the end of the second year, OHEPP staff conducted interviews with parents (n=15) and faculty members (n=10). These interviews were restricted to those parents and faculty who identified themselves as having participated in a *Tool Box* training session, developed a team *Blueprint*, and maintained an ongoing parent-faculty instructional team. The interviews were focused on identifying practices that prohibited including parents on instructional teams. Two OHPP staff independently reviewed responses and classified each according to agreed upon definitions. Then a constant comparison method was employed to reach consensus regarding classification of a particular response. The working definition for time included all responses that mentioned time and/or scheduling. Trust was conceptualized as containing an affective component and balance was defined as presenting either a parent or professional perspective. It should be noted that parents and faculty tended to cite the same factors as major barriers: time, trust and balance. Yet, in some instances there were differences in the level of significance each group attached to a specific factor. As indicated by the data represented in Figure 2, time was perceived as a barrier among equal numbers of parents (29%) and faculty (29%). Both faculty and parents acknowledged that team instruction was labor intensive, but a "worthwhile activity." Parents (58%) were more likely than faculty (35%) to note balance as a significant barrier. While both faculty and parents mentioned finding a way to balance the instruction between the "technical" and "parent" perspective, parents were more likely to report a personal impact when the two perspectives were in conflict. That is, some parents expressed the idea that finding a balance between "technical information" and the "parent perspective" translated into practices that indicated the "parent perspective was seen as an add-on." For example, parents on some parent-faculty teams reported that parent perspective was included only when time allowed as opposed to being an integrated curriculum component. Faculty (39%) were more than twice as likely as parents (16%) to note trust as the greatest barrier to supporting parent-faculty partnerships. Faculty expressed concerns about the level of congruence between the parent and professional perspective including "standard parent presentations that may not fit with the course objectives." Interestingly, it should be noted that there is a time component in both establishing trusting relationships and developing presentations that are equally balanced between parents and professionals. In other words, parent-faculty teams need time to plan, time to develop trust, and time for all members to participate. Despite the identification of barriers, it should be noted that all participants indicated their belief that the parent-faculty team would lead to enhanced learning outcomes for students far outweighed the barriers to parent-faculty teams in higher education.

Parent Activities. Once parent-faculty partnerships got over the initial challenges associated with getting their partnership started, parents become involved in numerous instructional activities within institutions of higher education. Parent-faculty partners were asked to submit *Parent Reimbursement* forms (see Appendix A). As shown in Figure 3, pre-selected categories were established to document the activities parents participated in: student selection (n=3); course/syllabus development (n=36); presentation (n=282); developing activities (n=97); practicum (n=5);program curricula review (n=24); assignments (n=11); co-instruction (n=332); program evaluation (n=1); and other activities (n=79). As indicated in Figure 3, classroom based instructional activities such as co-instruction and presentation represented greater than seventy percent (n=614) of the activities reported by parents. Co-instructional activities (38.2%) were the most frequently reported category of parent activity; while 32.4 percent of the reported activities represented a parent presentation. For the purpose of this project *co-instruction* was defined as courses where parents were involved with faculty and students in an ongoing manner. That is, to be included as a *co-instructional* activity parents had to interact with the same faculty member and students more than once during the semester. In contrast *presentation* was defined as occurring when parents were invited to spend a single session with students, either individually or as a member of a panel. The category *other activities* (9.1%) represented parent participation in a wide range of activities including in-service presentations and the videotaping of presentations. *Parent Reimbursement* forms were also used to record the number of hours parents contributed. Over the course of three years, parents contributed 3,607 hours to OHEPP activities.

Student Perceptions

Students enrolled in courses utilizing OHEPP parent-faculty teams were asked to provide feedback in relation to the activities presented. Students enrolled in courses where the parent participated in an ongoing basis were asked to evaluate the activities at the end of the semester (see Appendix B). Conversely, students enrolled in courses where parent participation was limited to one activity per semester completed their evaluations (see Appendix C) immediately after the presentation. The evaluations asked students to use a five-point Likert scale to indicate level of agreement with each of nine statements. Students provided additional feedback by responding to two open-ended questions. As evidenced by the data in Table 1, 2171 completed evaluations were received from students enrolled in two-year and four-year colleges and graduate and undergraduate programs. These data suggest that students felt they had benefited academically by having a parent included on the instructional team, that this was a good activity for their class and that they would recommend including parent-faculty teams in other courses.

Student reflections have emerged as an important component in examining parent-professional partnerships (Johnson & LaMontagne, 1993). In this project student responses to open ended evaluation questions (student reflections), were examined through content analysis (Patton, 1990). This qualitative research method enabled themes to emerge from three sources: a) group interviews (n=30); b) individual interviews; and c) written reflections (n=692). Data was analyzed and initial themes emerged. Constant comparison method (Miles & Huberman, 1998) was used to ensure that the themes drawn from student narratives were reliable. Thematic comments were tallied and a working data model was created. Triangulation (Patton, 1990) was the final step in the analysis

process. Stakeholders were invited to review the themes: professionals familiar with family-centered practices, parents of children with disabilities and students participating in OHEPP. These data suggest some short-term changes in students perceptions of parents of children with disability: 1) understanding theories and concepts from a parents' point-of-view, 2) developing greater empathy and understanding of how disability impacts families, and 3) a growing recognition that parents are knowledgeable in regard to their child's development and their specific disability. In addition, student reflections suggest an impact upon professional practices that could be associated with family-centered practitioners such as, "learning to humanize the IEP process," and "parents help us to remember that it is not all papers and programs-it is really all about children and families."

CONSLUSION

The OHEPP project developed, implemented, and reviewed a model for promoting greater levels of participation in personnel preparation by parents of children with disabilities. OHEPP was able to meet the objectives conceptualized in designing an instructional model that address this multifaceted phenomenon that included the following components: a) developing parent skills and understanding of higher education; b) promoting access to and financial support of parents; c) increasing faculty receptiveness to parent-participation. The OHEPP model of parent-faculty partnerships resulted in an increase in the number of parents involved in higher education and an increase in the number and types of courses in which parents were involved. In addition, the role of parents on instructional teams in higher education expanded. Finally, students demonstrated a change in they way they view the role of parents of children with disabilities in higher education.

The training activities developed by OHEPP were designed to support both parents and faculty while developing parents' skills and understanding of higher education. These activities included workshops and retreats. Parents and faculty members reported a high level of satisfaction with the activities developed to link and support project participants such as the initial training activities, annual retreats, and the open lines of communication such as periodic phone and on-site contact. OHEPP was able to increase the number of parents involved in preservice personnel preparation by promoting access to and providing financial support of parents. OHEPP was able to provide financial support for parent involvement in institutions of higher education. Parents were financially compensated for contributing more than 3600 hours to project activities. Access to parents was promoted through the initial linking of partners and opportunities for ongoing interactions such as the parent-faculty directory and the electronic listserve. In comparison to previous literature, OHEPP participants represented an increase in the number and types of courses in which parents were involved. Faculty members participating in OHEPP represented twelve disciplines from twelve different universities/colleges. Over the three years, parent-faculty teams were involved in twenty-eight different courses.

OHEPP was able to increase faculty receptiveness to parent-participation on instructional teams in higher education. This change in perception among faculty members was demonstrated by the increase in the diverse roles parents occupied in these partnerships.

The parent activities reported by OHEPP participants are consistent with recommended practices for personnel preparation: as instructors, mentors and supervisors (Fenichel & Eggbeer, 1990). For example, co-instruction was the most frequently reported parent activity. In this role parents had multiple opportunities to interact with students throughout the semester. Additional activities reported by OHEPP parents included developing classroom activities, developing course content/constructing course syllabus, reviewing curricula, participating in student selection processes for competitive internships, and evaluating discipline specific programs.

OHEPP has documented some changes in how students view the value and role of parents of children with disabilities. Students enrolled in 12 early intervention disciplines benefited from the activities presented by parent-faculty teams. Student narratives and quantitative data suggest that including a parent on the instructional team led to an increased awareness of the family's perspective, enhanced empathy and understanding of the impact of disability upon families, and impacted professional practices by "humanizing the process."

OHEPP developed a model for promoting greater levels of participation within institutions of higher education by parents of children with disabilities. OHEPP was able to address barriers previously identified with preventing parent involvement in preservice and inservice personnel preparation. In sum, OHEPP was able to train and involve many parents in many roles on parent-faculty teams that enhanced the learning opportunities of numerous students. The OHEPP project helped to meet the need to train practitioners in the principles of family-centered care for infants and toddlers with disabilities and their families by modeling parent-provider collaboration, promoting an affective component of family-centered practices, and integrating family-centered principles in course development and implementation. The OHEPP project suggests that the use of parent-faculty teams in higher education although hard work and labor-intensive can impact students' knowledge and skills. It appears that the use of parent-faculty partnerships is a vehicle that can change the culture of higher education for both students and faculty, and, consequently, can enhance the quality of the professionals being prepared for practice with families and children with special needs.

Figure 1 Getting Parent-Faculty Teams Started in Higher Education: Relative Percents Reported by OHEPP Participants

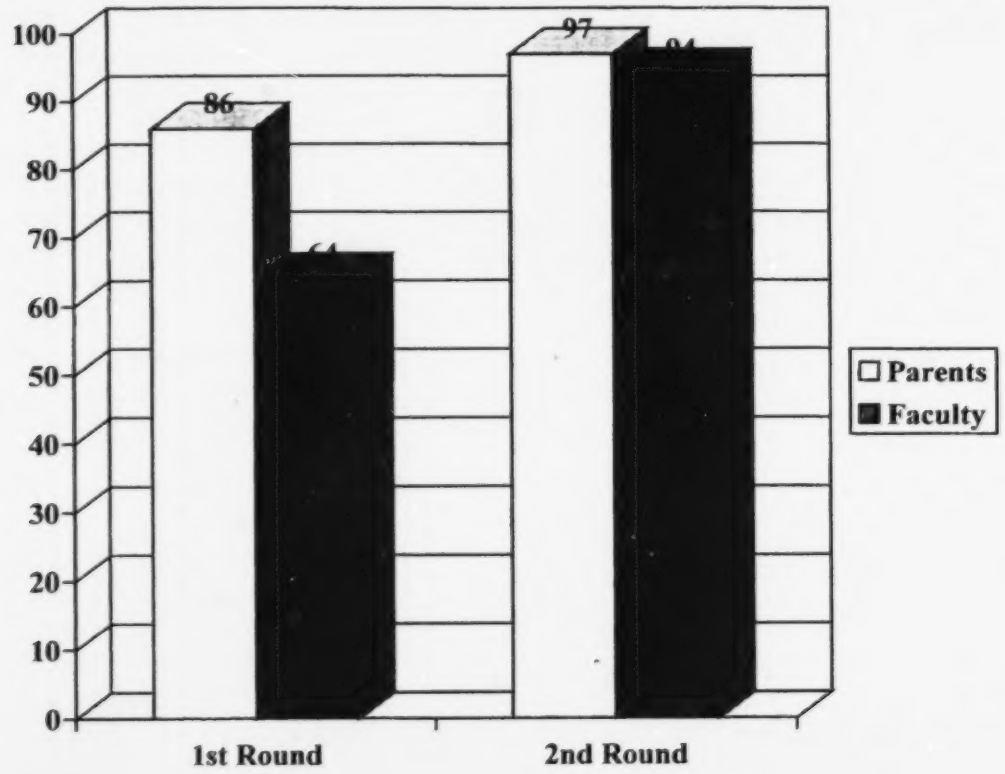

Figure 2. Barriers to Forming a Supportive Relationship among Parent-Faculty Teams: Relative Percents Reported by OHEPP Participants

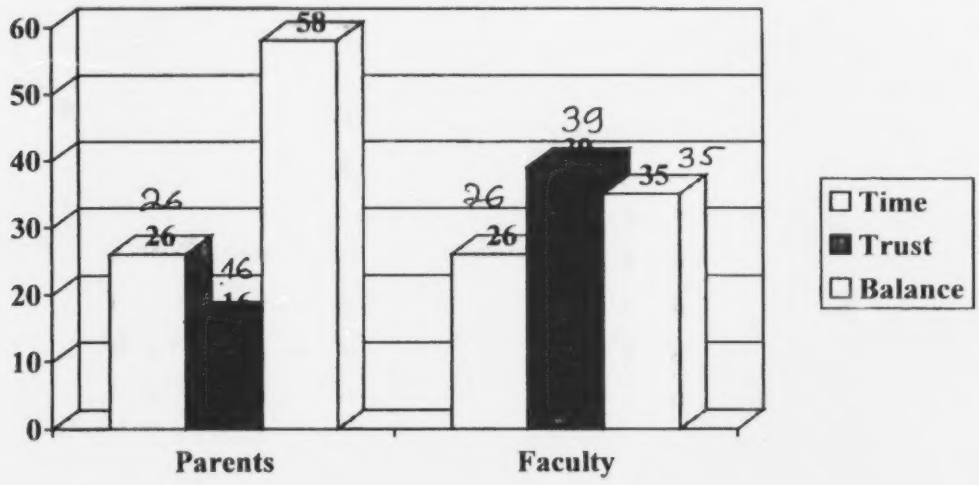

Figure 3. Parent Activities: Relative Percents Reported by Parents Participating on OHEPP Teams

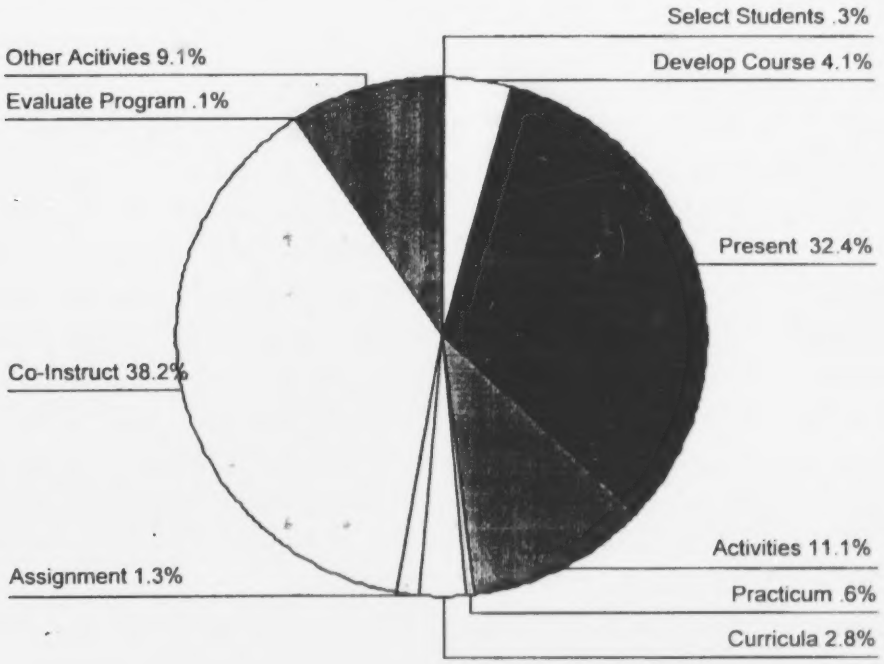

Table 1. Student Perceptions of Parent-Faculty Partnerships in Higher Education: As Reported by Students Enrolled in Courses Utilizing OHEPP Teams

	Missing	Strongly Disagree 1	Disagree 2	Some-what Agree 3	Agree 4	Strongly Agree 5	Mean
Inclusion of a parent increased my level of understanding of the topic.	n=3 .1%	n=36 1.7%	n=30 1.4%	n=136 6.3%	n=483 22.2 %	n=1483 68.3%	x=4.54
I had a good understanding of the topic prior to participating in this project.	n=1 .0%	n=143 6.6%	n=408 18.8%	n=800 36.8%	n=531 24.5%	n=288 13.3%	x=3.19
The parent generated handouts and activities helped make the issues clearer.	n=145 6.7%	n=38 1.8%	n=82 3.8%	n=338 15.6%	n=679 31.3%	n=889 40.9%	x=4.13
I learned some new techniques that I will be able to use in my professional practices.	n=23 1.1%	n=42 1.9%	n=99 4.6%	n=357 16.4%	n=746 34.4%	n=904 41.6%	x=4.10
The inclusion of a parent provided a helpful perspective.	n=14 .6%	n=42 1.9%	n=33 1.5%	n=77 3.5%	n=314 14.5%	n=1691 77.9%	x=4.66
The inclusion of a parent stimulated participation by class members.	n=23 1.1%	n=62 2.9%	n=164 7.6%	n=467 21.5%	n=702 32.3%	n=753 34.7%	x=3.89
The time allocated for parent participation was sufficient. **	n=680 31.3%	n=56 2.6%	n=114 5.3%	n=204 9.4%	n=473 21.8%	n=644 29.7%	x=4.03
This was appropriate for our class.	n=5 .2%	n=31 1.4%	n=27 1.2%	n=77 3.5%	n=261 12.0%	n=1770 81.5%	x=4.71
I would recommend including parents in other classes.	n=6 .3%	n=34 1.6%	n=26 1.2%	n=81 3.7%	n=262 12.1%	n=1762 81.2%	x=4.71

• N=2171

** This statement was not utilized during co-instruction partnerships.

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"A Real Eye-Opener:" Looking At Parent-Faculty Partnerships Through Students' Eyes

From the Ohio Higher Education Partnership Project
At the Family Child Learning Center
Presented at the 16th Annual
DEC International Early Childhood Conference on Children with Special Needs
December 9, 2000

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Ohio Higher Education Partnership Project

The Ohio Higher Education Partnership Project and the publication of its materials are supported by Grant #HO29K70125, Office of Special Education and Rehabilitative Services, U.S. Department of Education.

Ohio Higher Education Partnership Project

OHEPP

A Model for Creating and Maintaining Parent-Faculty Partnerships

Ruth Montz, Angie Giallourakis, Marilyn Espe-Sherwindt and Barbara Weinberg

Creating Parent-Faculty Partnerships

- Tool Box Training Sessions:
  - Defined project options and boundaries
  - Created "Blueprints for Partnerships"
  - Linked parents and faculty:
    - 68 participants
      - 35 parents and 33 faculty members

Faculty Profile

- Institutions of Higher Education
  - 12 Northeastern Ohio Universities and Colleges
- Disciplines
  - Audiology, Counseling, Early Childhood Education, Education (K-12), Nursing, Nutrition, Occupational Therapy, Pediatrics, Rehabilitation, School Psychology, Speech-Language Pathology, and Special Education

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Evolution of the Tool Box

- How long? Four 3-hour sessions to one six-hour session
- Which activities? Those that responded to the actual implementation challenges: role clarification, communication & misconceptions
- What do we mean by "partners"? Building on matches made in heaven, not blind dates
- Whom are we supporting? Parents AND Faculty

Maintaining Parent-Faculty Partnerships

- Supportive Activities:
  - Funding stream for parent participation
  - Parent-Faculty Resource Directory
  - Spring Retreat for parents
  - Class Reunions
  - Open lines of communication
  - Listserv for OHEPP parents and faculty

Challenges and Barriers

- Challenges
  - Overcoming stereotypes
  - Labor intensive inflexible
  - Defining Partnerships
- Barriers
  - Parents waiting to be invited
  - Part-time faculty status

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Partnership Activities

- **Many Parents Engaged in Many Activities**
  - 2100 Hours Devoted to the Project
  - Co-Instruction Activities (41%)
  - Presentations (32%)
  - Developing Activities (11%)
  - Course/Syllabus Development (5%)
  - Program/Curricular Review (3%)
  - Assignment (2%)
  - Other (6%)
    - (e.g., Student Selection or Practicum)

Student Profile

- Program
  - Associate, Bachelor, or Graduate Degree
- Courses
  - Special Education
  - Nursing
  - Early Childhood Education
  - Counseling/Special Education
  - School Psychology
  - Educational Foundations/Support Services
  - Interdisciplinary Seminar
  - Other e.g., Nutrition, and Medicine

Student Reflections

- How were student reflections collected?
  - ...two most important things you learned
- How were student reflections examined?
  - Content Analysis and Constant Comparison
    - Potential Themes- working definitions
    - Comparison-key words, tallies, data display
- Triangulation
  - Group and individual interviews

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Student Reflections

Through Students' Eyes

- Emerging Themes:
  - Parents Point of View
  - Empathy and Understanding
  - Parents Imparting Knowledge
  - Impacting Professional Practices
  - Impacting Training Practices

Parents Point of View

- "What parents want from professionals."
- "Realities of dealing with schools from a parents point of view."
- "Point of view from a parent of how professionals perceive parents."

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Empathy and Understanding

- "I learned a little of what it was like to be on the other end of homework assignments and home programs."
- "To see the resilience of the human spirit…to pick up another balloon and blow it up."
- "Each time the parent spoke I gained more understanding about their needs."

Parents Imparting Knowledge

- "Listen and Believe."
- "Parents will teach the teachers."
- "Parents are the greatest source of information."
- "Opened my eyes to the specific disability and the unique concerns related to it."

Impacting Professional Practices

- "We need to see first…to understand before we speak."
- "I learned to humanize the IEP process."
- "That all children should be celebrated!"
- "Parents help us to remember that it is not all papers and programs-it is really all about children and families."

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Impacting Training Practices

- "I just liked talking to them."
- …wonderful handouts and resources."
- "This is more 'real' than scenarios."
- "Knowing the parents on a somewhat personal level is very important."

Implications for the Future

- Family-Centered Practitioners
  - Effective training model
  - Funding stream
- Students Narratives
  - Critical evaluation component

PARTNERSHIPS

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PARENT-FACULTY PARTNERSHIPS: WHERE ARE WE GOING?

From the Ohio Higher Education Partnership Project
At the Family Child Learning Center
Presented at the 17th Annual
DEC International Early Childhood Conference on Children with Special Needs
December 4, 2001

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Parent-Faculty Partnerships: Where are we going?

Presentation for the 17th Annual DEC International Early Childhood Conference onChildren with Special Needs and Their Families
December 4, 2001
Boston, MA

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Special Partnerships

- Visualize a partnership that has made you feel special!
- What did your partner do that made the relationship special to you?

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Parent/Faculty Partnerships: Where We've Been

- Changing roles of families in the education of young children with special needs.
  - Planning personnel preparation
  - Personnel training

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OHEPP: Involving Parents in Instructional Roles

- Parent Participation
  - Developing skills of parents
  - Promoting access to parents
  - Increasing faculty receptiveness to parent participation

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OHEPP: Tool Box Workshops

- ✓Described options
- ✓Linked parents and faculty
- ✓Participants created BLUEPRINTS

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Evolution of the Tool Box

- How long? Four 3-hour sessions to one six-hour session
- Which activities? Those that responded to the actual implementation challenges: role clarification, communication & misconceptions
- What do we mean by "partners"? Building on matches made in heaven, not blind dates
- Whom are we supporting? Parents AND Faculty

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Partnership Profile: Parents

- 12 Ohio counties
- Topics of interest:
  - Autism, Cerebral Palsy, Early Intervention Services, Family-Centered Practices, Financial Resources, Home-School-Community Relations, IEP/IFSP Process, Laws, Regulations & Policy, Life With My Child, Medical Issues, Parent-Professional Collaboration, Social Support, Therapeutic Interventions, and Transition Services

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Partnership Profile: Faculty

- 12 Ohio universities and colleges
- Disciplines:
  - Audiology, Counseling, Early Childhood Education, Education (K-12), Nursing, Nutrition, Occupational Therapy, Pediatrics, Rehabilitation, School Psychology, Speech-Language Pathology and Special Education

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Parent Activities

- Co-Instruction
- Presentation
- Developing Activities
- Course/Syllabus Development
- Program/Curricula Review
- Practicum Placement
- Other (student selection, program evaluation and grading student assignments)

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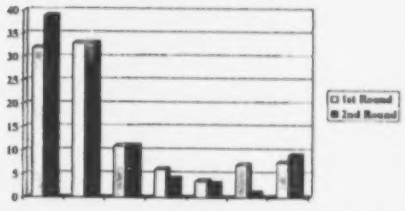
Parent Activities



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Partnerships: Getting Started

- Partnership activities
  - More parents than faculty
- Barriers
  - Part-time faculty status
  - Course scheduling
  - Parents waiting to be invited

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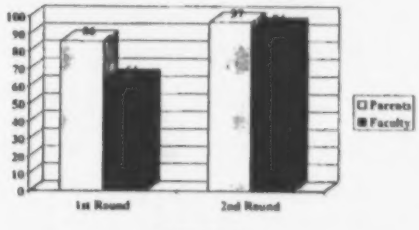
Partnerships: Getting Started



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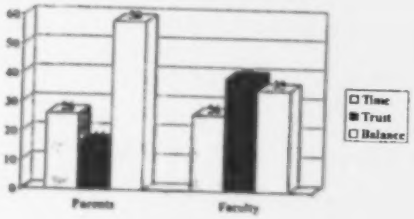
Partnerships: The Relationship

- ✓Time
- ✓Trust
- ✓Balance

Partnerships: The Relationship



Partnerships: TIME

Parents	Faculty
✓"Time consuming: the planning."	✓"Labor intensive-but it's definitely worth it!"
✓"Time away from family and finding someone to care for my child."	✓"Planning-we are both very busy."
✓"Scheduling, having no input."	✓"Scheduling and timing-little input."

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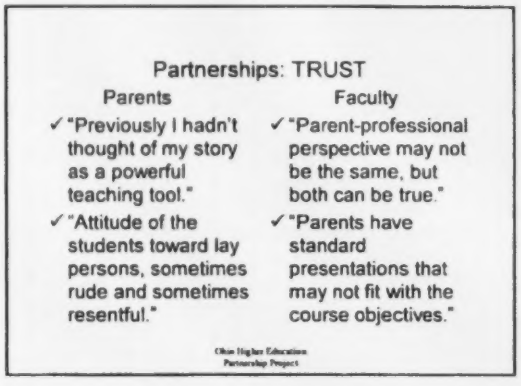
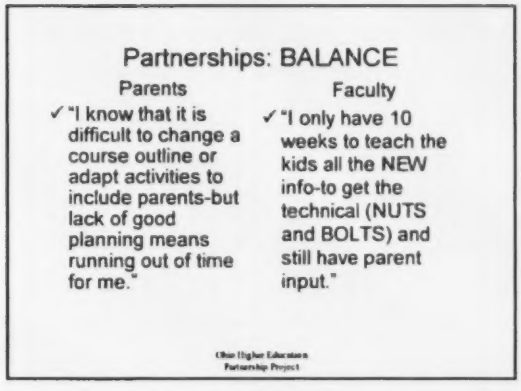
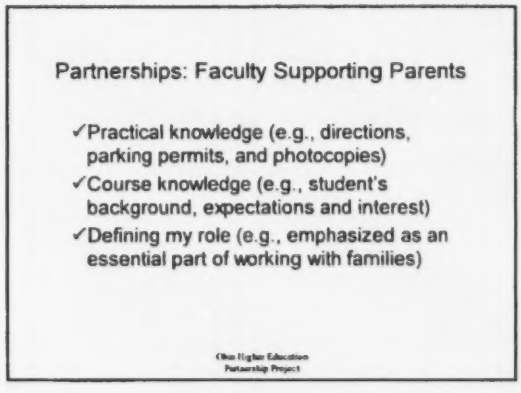

Partnerships: TRUST
Parents
✓"Previously I hadn't thought of my story as a powerful teaching tool."
✓"Attitude of the students toward lay persons, sometimes rude and sometimes resentful."
Faculty
✓"Parent-professional perspective may not be the same, but both can be true."
✓"Parents have standard presentations that may not fit with the course objectives."


Partnerships: BALANCE
Parents
✓"I know that it is difficult to change a course outline or adapt activities to include parents-but lack of good planning means running out of time for me."
Faculty
✓"I only have 10 weeks to teach the kids all the NEW info-to get the technical (NUTS and BOLTS) and still have parent input."


Partnerships: Faculty Supporting Parents
✓Practical knowledge (e.g., directions, parking permits, and photocopies)
✓Course knowledge (e.g., student's background, expectations and interest)
✓Defining my role (e.g., emphasized as an essential part of working with families)

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Partnerships:
Institutions Supporting Faculty

- ✓Philosophical commitment to family-centered care but no formal mechanism to support family involvement in instruction
- ✓Verbal recognition or observation by department chair/dean
- ✓Limited financial support (e.g., parking permits)

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OHEPP:
Supporting Parent/Faculty Partnerships

- ✓Funding stream for parents
- ✓Parent-faculty resource directory
- ✓Parent Retreat
- ✓Class reunions
- ✓List-serve (e-group)

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Partnerships: Faculty Impact

- " I no longer feel comfortable talking for families."
- I used to think I could use examples and things families had said to represent family voice. I now know it's more powerful coming from the source.
- Without families we aren't addressing the skills folks will need to work with families."
- "Made parents more accessible in an organized way."
- "I didn't have to pay parents out-of-pocket."
- "I can't imagine teaching without a parent partner."

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Partnerships: Parent Impact

- "This is a great way to improve the system, just speak-up and be willing to advocate for change."
- "Your sharing will have more lasting impact than anything in a book."
- "You will receive just as much or more than you give."
- "I bounced ideas/strategies for my child off my students prior to presenting them at the IEP meeting."
- "If you are asked-Just Do It!"

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Partnerships: Student Impact

- Parent Perspective: "What parents want from professionals."
- Empathy: "I learned a little of what it was like on the other end of homework assignments and home programs."
- Parents as Experts: "Listen and Believe!" – "Parents will teach the teachers."
- Professional Practices: "Parents help us to remember that it is not all papers and programs-it is really all about children and families."

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Parent/Faculty Partnerships: Where are we going?

Involving Parents in Instructional Roles

➢Support for parents

✓Funding stream

➢Support for faculty

✓Professional development (e.g., merit or reappointment)

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